

I'm learning about...

Eid-ul-Fitr

SANIYASNAIN KHAN

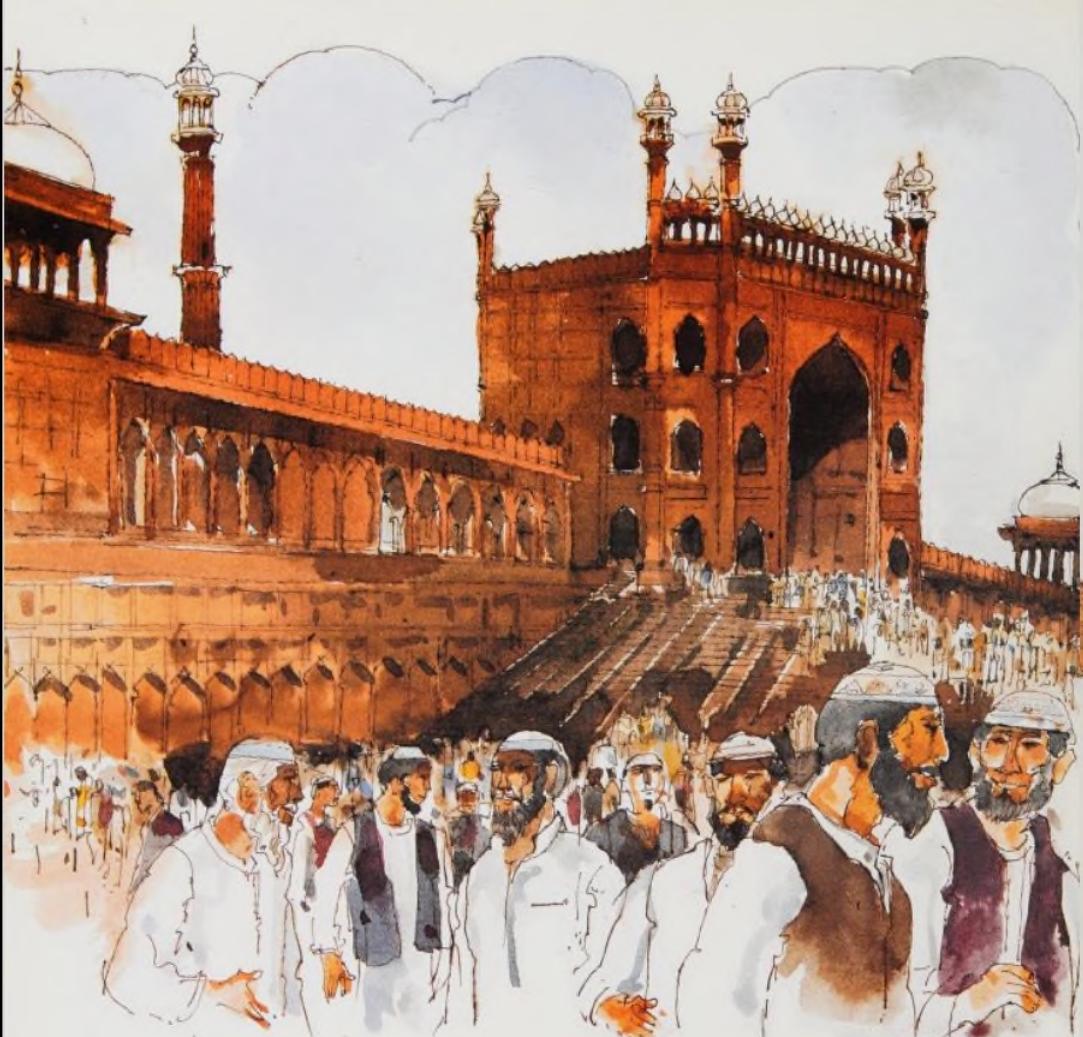
Illustrated by PULAK BISWAS



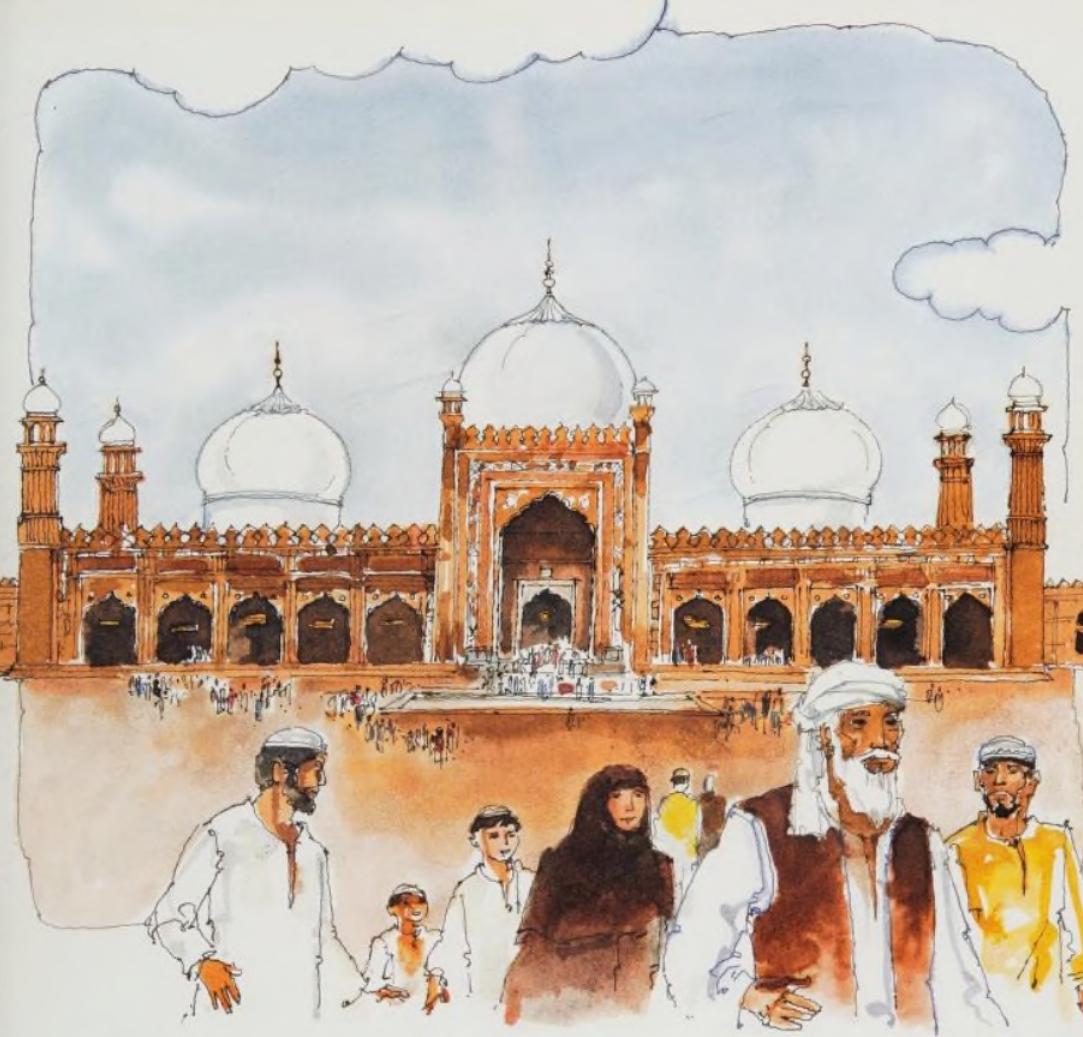
Today is the very last day of fasting of the month of Ramadan and Faisal and Farah are very excited. They are looking forward to Eid-ul-Fitr tomorrow, as they eat delicious suhur, a very early morning food eaten more than an hour before sunrise. Now they will keep the fast for the whole day and only break it just after sunset.



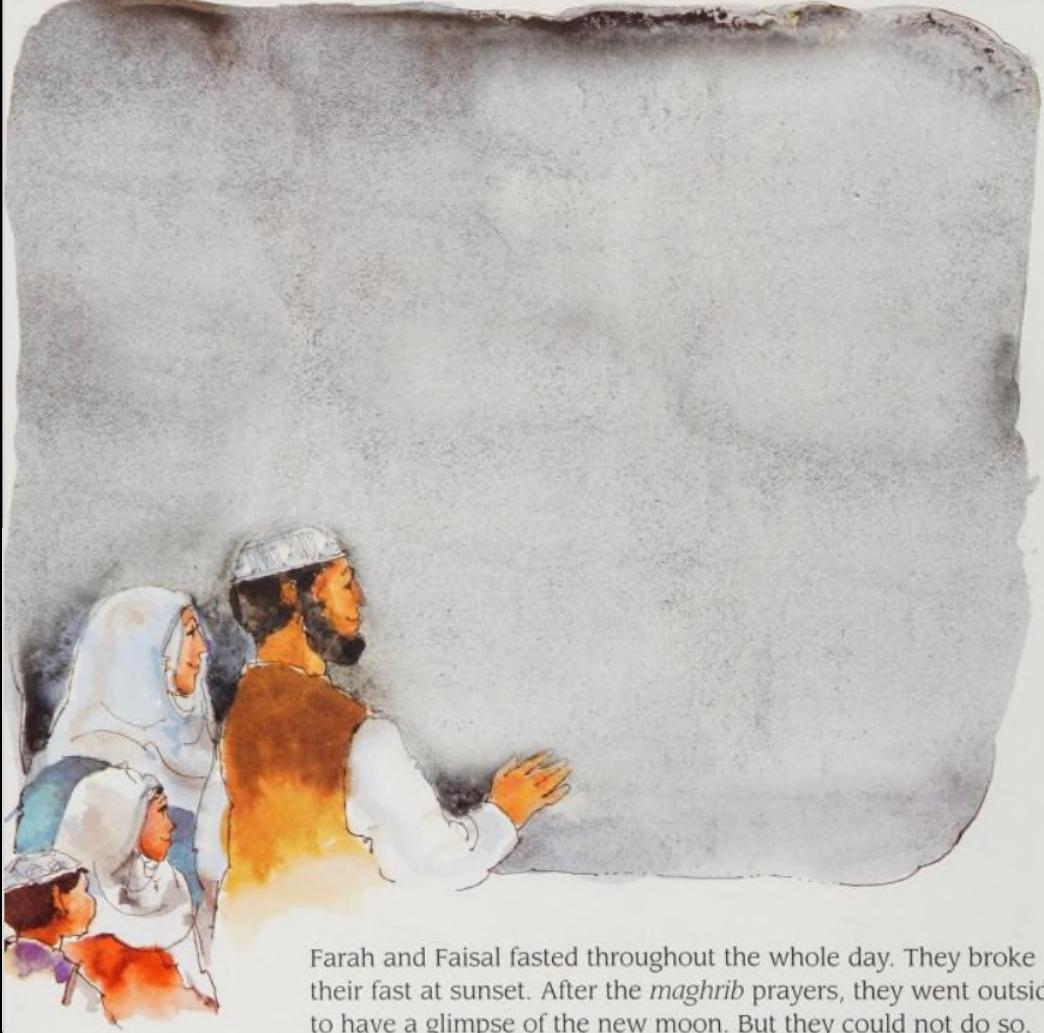
Faisal and Farah go to a school and live in East London where their father works as a school teacher. Their parents originally came from India, but have now been settled in England for many years. During the *suhur*, their father told them the stories of Ramadan in India and the magnificent mosque in Delhi which is known as the Jama Masjid.



Jama Masjid, Delhi.

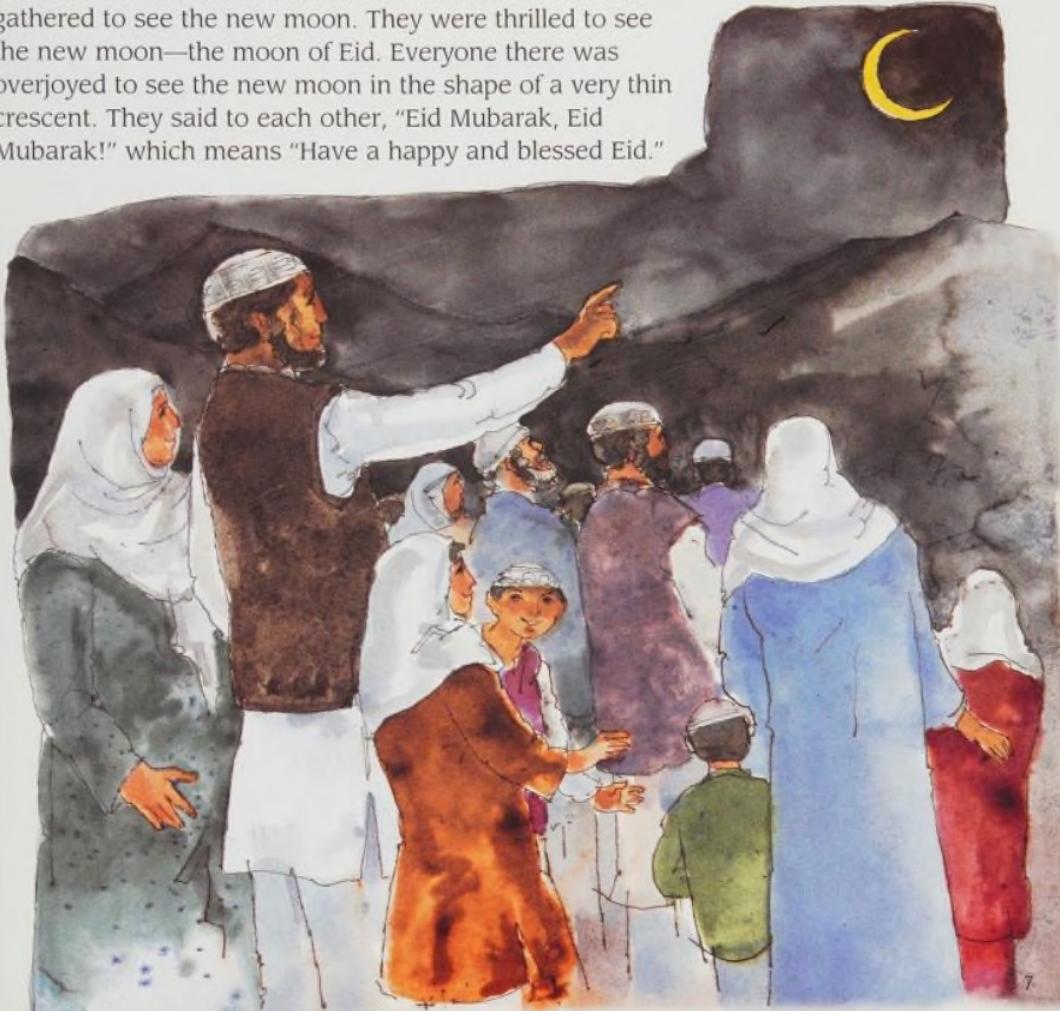


Badshahi Mosque in Lahore.



Farah and Faisal fasted throughout the whole day. They broke their fast at sunset. After the *maghrib* prayers, they went outside to have a glimpse of the new moon. But they could not do so.

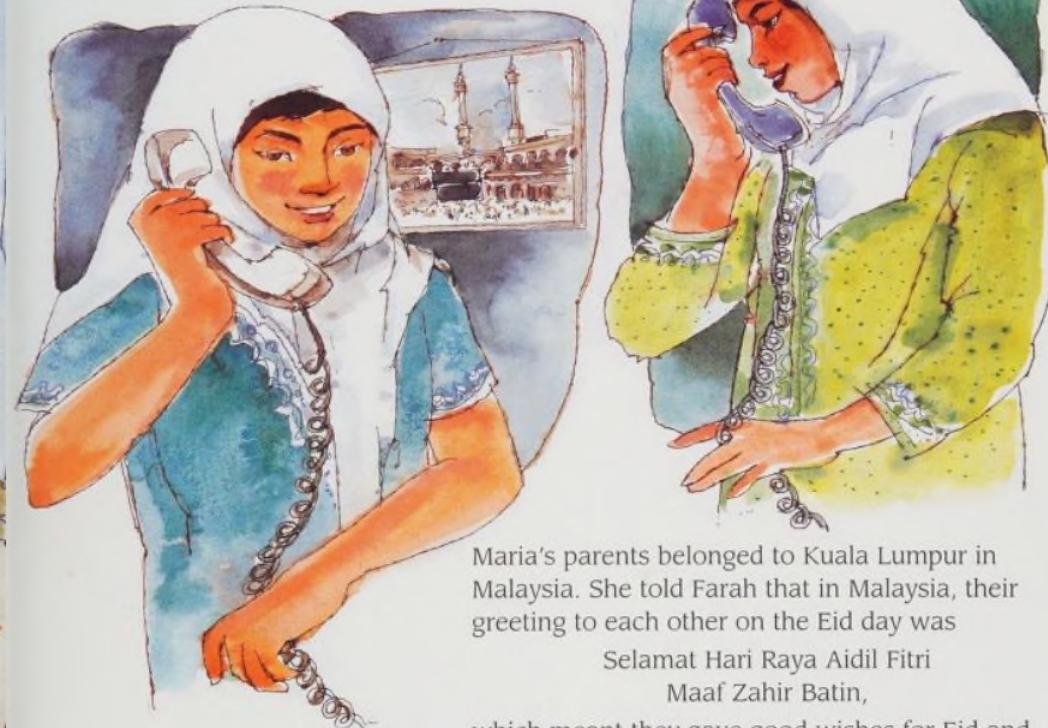
So they left their house and went to a park where the sky was clear. There were other families there too who had gathered to see the new moon. They were thrilled to see the new moon—the moon of Eid. Everyone there was overjoyed to see the new moon in the shape of a very thin crescent. They said to each other, “Eid Mubarak, Eid Mubarak!” which means “Have a happy and blessed Eid.”





The Sultan Salahuddin Mosque in Shah Alam near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The moment Farah came home she called up her friend Maria to give her the good news of the moon of Eid. They wished each other a happy and blessed Eid and promised to meet in the mosque the next morning.



Maria's parents belonged to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. She told Farah that in Malaysia, their greeting to each other on the Eid day was

Selamat Hari Raya Aidil Fitri
Maaf Zahir Batin,

which meant they gave good wishes for Eid and prayed for each others' forgiveness. She told her about the beautiful Blue Domed Mosque in Shah Alam near Kuala Lumpur known as the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque.

The next morning as Farah and Faisal sat at the table for breakfast, their parents reminded them that, before beginning to eat, they should say, *Bismillahir rahmanir rahim*, which means, "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful." They also taught them the short prayer to be said after finishing the meal: *Al-hamdulillahil-ladhi at'amana wa saqana wa ja'alana min al-muslimin*, which means, "Praise be to Allah, who has given us food and drink and made us believers."



After a while, Farah and Faisal arrived at Regent's Park mosque with their parents. Faisal's parents gave some money to the poor before entering the mosque. This is called *zakat al-fitr*, or *fitrah*, which is a special donation to charity made to enable poor Muslims to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr. It is equivalent to a quart of grain per person in a household, paid directly to the needy or through the mosque at the end of Ramadan.



Farah and Faisal entered the mosque saying, *Allahumma-iftah li abwaba rahmatik*, which means, "O Allah! Open for me the gates of Your mercy!" Farah was happy to meet Maria in the mosque.

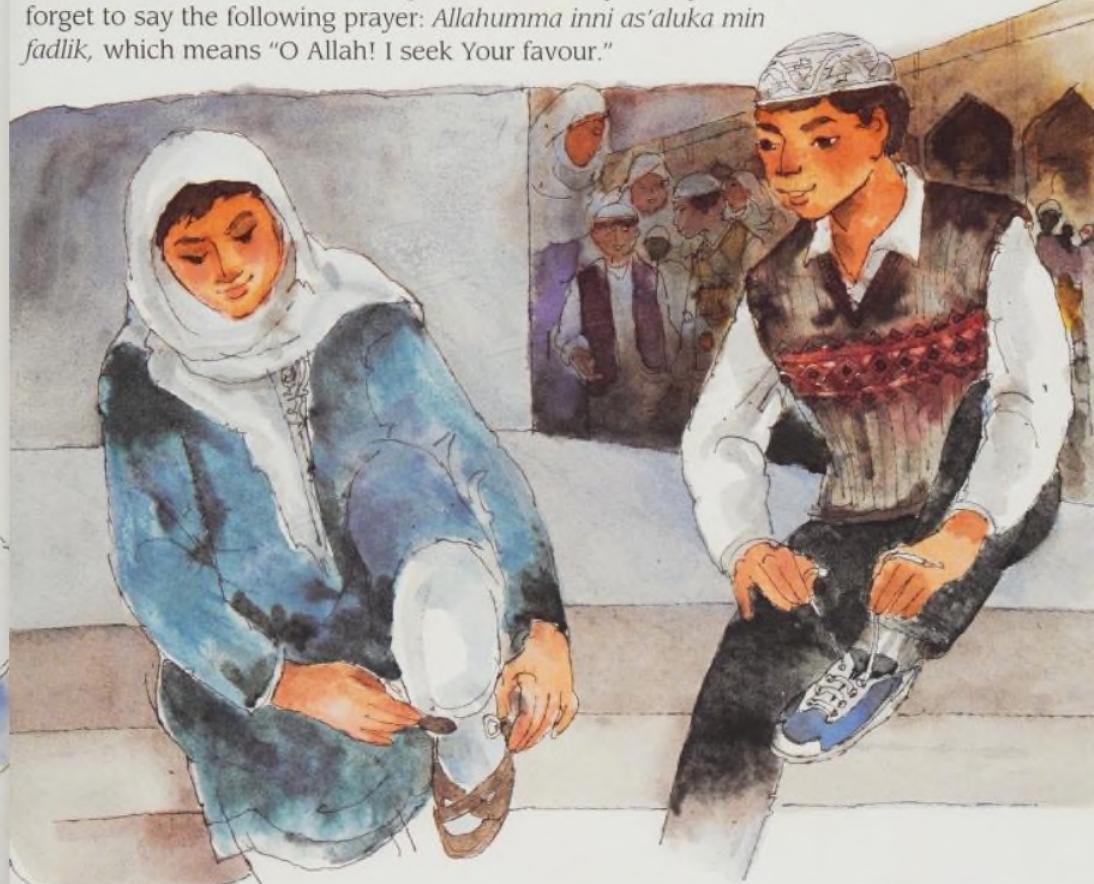


They greeted each other, saying *Assalamu Alaykum*, which means "Peace be upon you." As they talked about their plans to enjoy this joyous day of Eid, Farah's mother ushered them towards the ladies' area. This is a separate enclosure in the mosque where only ladies can pray.

They prayed special two-rakah Eid prayers and listened attentively to the *Khutba* (sermon) of the Imam, who told them the significance of Ramadan and Eid. At the end the Imam prayed for the community, their country and its people. He also prayed for peace and harmony in the world. After the end of the sermon, they all got up and embraced one another, saying, "Eid Mubarak," which means, "Have a happy and blessed Eid."

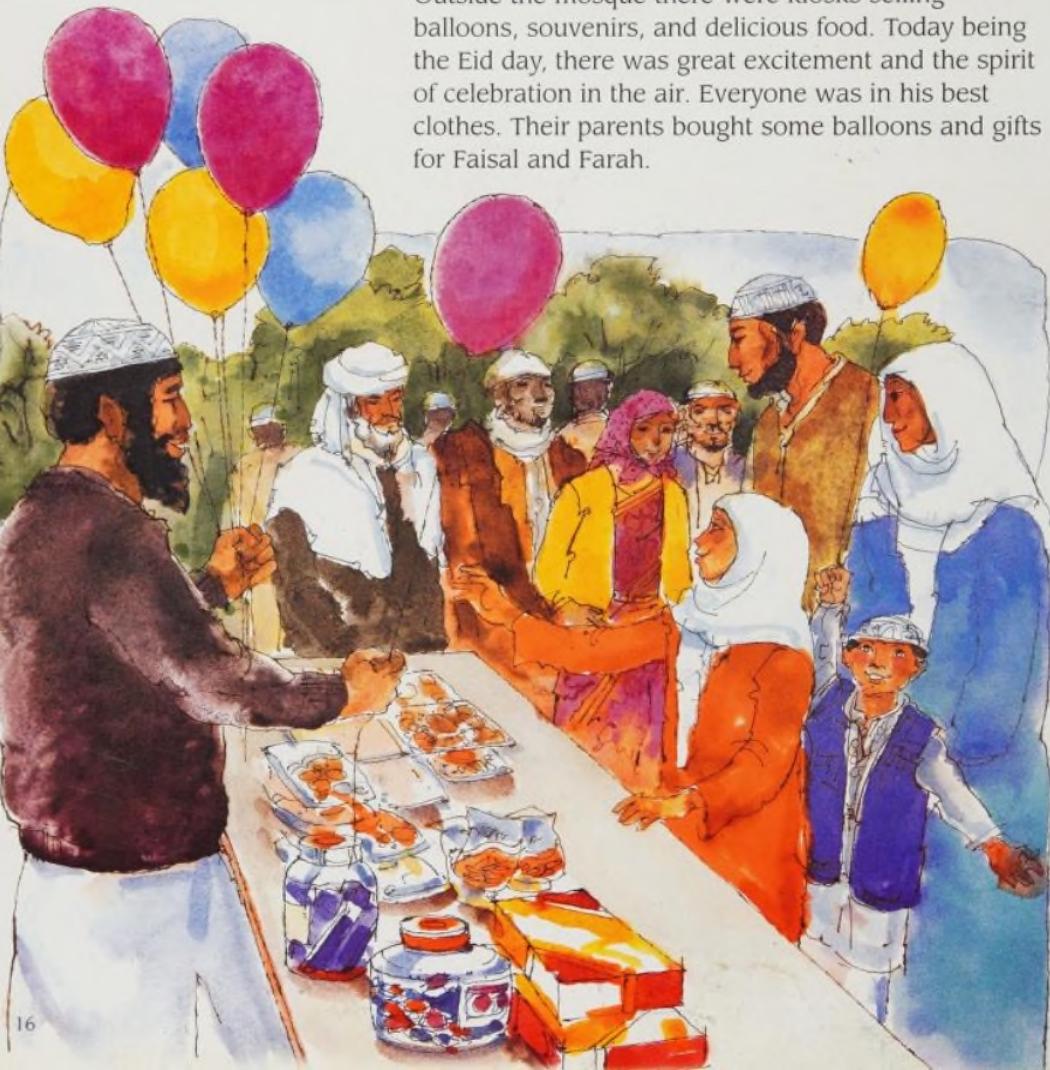


As Farah and Faisal were coming out of the mosque, they did not forget to say the following prayer: *Allahumma inni as'alauka min fadlik*, which means "O Allah! I seek Your favour."



Faisal always loved to come to this gorgeous mosque and Islamic centre in central London, which is surrounded by beautiful gardens.

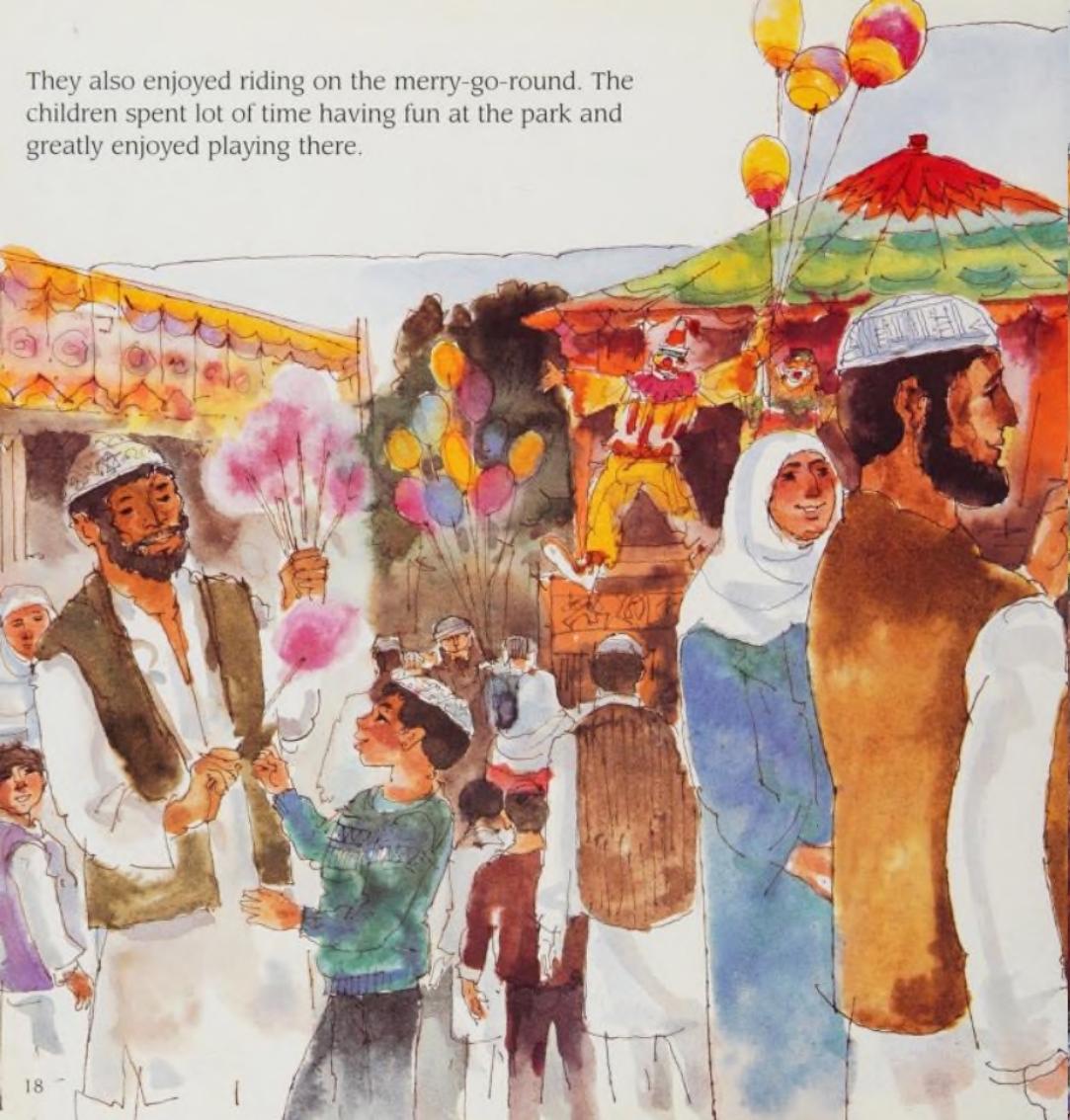
Outside the mosque there were kiosks selling balloons, souvenirs, and delicious food. Today being the Eid day, there was great excitement and the spirit of celebration in the air. Everyone was in his best clothes. Their parents bought some balloons and gifts for Faisal and Farah.



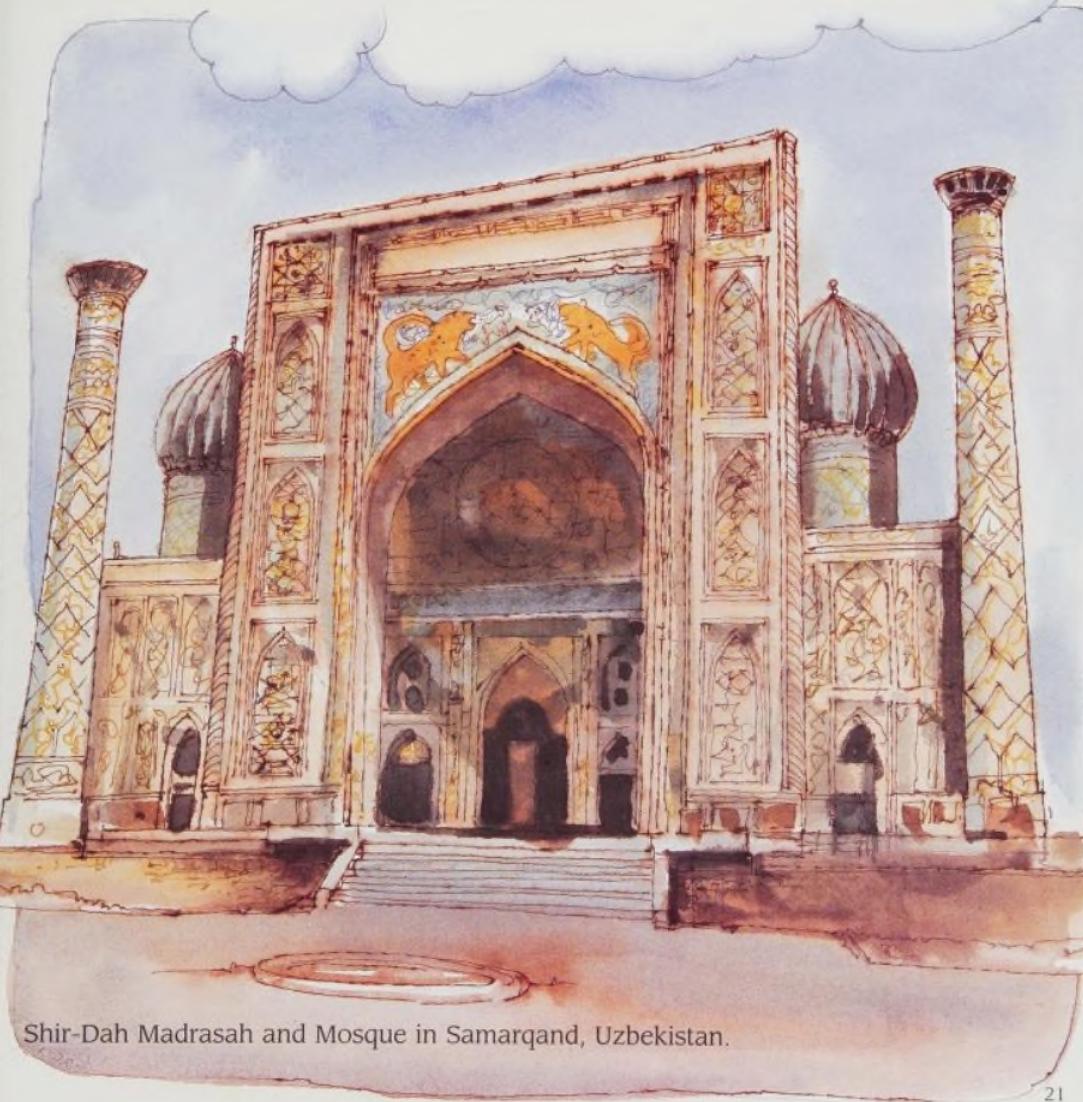
On the way back home the family stopped at a park where the children enjoyed riding on the giant wheel.



They also enjoyed riding on the merry-go-round. The children spent lot of time having fun at the park and greatly enjoyed playing there.



There Farah and Faisal also met some of their school friends. One of them was Javed. He told them stories about Eid in Samarqand and Bukhara. Javed recently read about these places in a book.



Shir-Dah Madrasah and Mosque in Samarqand, Uzbekistan.



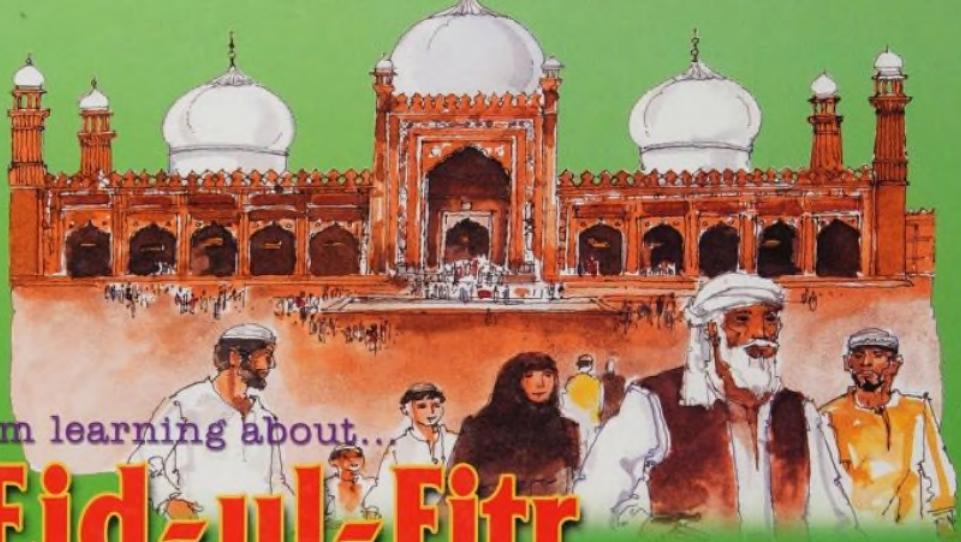
Farah and Faisal returned home in the afternoon. Their parents gave them presents for Eid. They thanked their parents and thanked Allah for giving them such a wonderful day on Eid. Faisal's father explained the true significance of Eid to them.

Their father explained to them that Eid-ul-Fitr is not just for celebrations and eating delicious dishes, but in actual fact is meant for the remembrance of Allah, so that His servants may worship Him on this day and glorify His name and thank Him for all the blessings which He has bestowed upon them.





The years have passed and Faisal and Farah are now grown up. But whenever they look through the family picture album and see the pictures of Eid, they vividly remember that joyous day of Eid-ul-Fitr. They try to hold back their tears as they pray: *Rabbir ham huma kama rabbayani saghira*, which means, "My Lord, have mercy on my parents as they raised me up when I was little." (The Quran, *Surah al-Isra'*, 17:24).



I'm learning about...

Eid-ul-Fitr

Eid, which means "happiness" is the most joyous festival of the Muslim calendar. Eid-ul-Fitr is the first day after the month-long fasting of Ramadan. Muslims throughout the world prepare for this day. They give food and money to the poor. They clean their homes, wear their best clothes and prepare special sweets for the family and friends. They also attend special Eid prayers in the mosque or in an open area.

This little book on Eid-ul-Fitr tells the story of two young children living in London—how they celebrate their Eid by visiting the mosque, meeting their friends, eating delicious food, and enjoying carnival rides. And how their parents explain to them the true meaning of Eid-ul-Fitr.